

### Message from the Regional Administrator

SBA's year long 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration will conclude at SBA Expo 2004 scheduled for May 19-21 in Orlando, Florida. This year's event will include recognition of small business owners and champions of small business who have made significant contributions to the development of their communities and states.



Much like NECE 2003 held last fall in Washington, this year's conference will include the agency's largest ever small business matchmaking event, some great training for small business and unique opportunities to network with business, government and political leaders from across the country. This will be a one-of-a-kind event that small business owners in your state will not want to miss.

SBA Expo 04 presents a great chance for businesses in Region IV to benefit from a national matchmaking event and expo without leaving the southeast. Make certain to do all you can do to get the word out to all you small business contacts and partners about SBA Expo.



Nuby

### One Agency with One Voice New SBA Marketing Plan Announced

The Office of Marketing and Customer Service has unveiled a comprehensive marketing plan that creates a framework for building a more cohesive and effective national marketing effort. Bonnie Friedman, newly appointed Director of Marketing, has been the driving force behind the new plan and is charged with guiding its implementation.

Recognizing that without a national marketing plan, regional and district offices have historically acted independently in determining how best to brand and market SBA products, the plan calls for a more centralized and uniformed approach. Given that the new SBA will require an even greater commitment to marketing and outreach activities by district offices, it is more critical than ever before to have one look, one message and one set of marketing goals agency wide.

Among the most immediate changes is the agency's logo. The basic design will remain the same, but the color-coded logos for divisions within the Agency are being eliminated. All agency publications and marketing materials will use either a black and white or a blue logo. The blue will be modified to improve visual contrast and reduce printing cost. The agency's positioning statement will also be slightly modified from "America's Small Business Resource" to "Your Small Business Resource." Though minor, the change says volumes about the agency's efforts to communicate more directly with small business. Adding "Your" personalizes the message and speaks directly to our customer.



There are also changes in the marketing materials we use.  
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# CUSTOMER SERVICE IS JOB ONE

*Is it time to brush up on your skills?*

**Computer** technology has changed the American workplace like nothing since the telephone. It brought us multitasking and megatasking. It has made communications instantaneous, printed encyclopedias obsolete, and put the world at our fingertips. Yet with all these tools to help us do more, do it faster and better, technology seems to offer little in the way of enhanced customer service.

In fact quite the opposite is true if you consider the frustration we all experience when confronting electronic phone messengers, self-serve grocery store check-outs and computer generated billing statements that require an accounting degree to decipher. For now anyway, customer service seems to fall into that category of ancient arts, like yoga and Swedish massage that defies the technology onslaught. Customer service is a hands-on craft that still requires the personal touch. It requires special care and attention or it will become a casualty of our modern, high-tech mindset.

It is often said that the staff member running a front desk is the most important person in an organization. The way an office front desk is managed certainly does leave a lasting impression on office visitors and callers alike. But in reality, every person in an office has an equal stake in providing first class customer services.

Now that spring is here, take time to spruce up your customer service regime. Here are some tips to help you and your office reach peak customer service performance.



## Have the right attitude

- Provide good customer service, not because you have to, but because you want to.
- Just remember to treat each customer as you would want and expect to be treated: with respect and courtesy.
- It is an old cliché, but the customer comes first, always.

## First Impressions

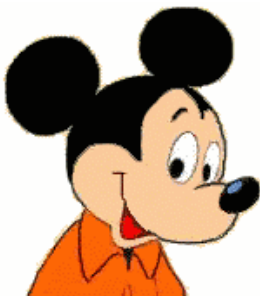
- If you are staffing a front desk, always welcome clients with a friendly and upbeat greeting.
- Answer the telephone in a professional and polite tone.
- Stand when a visitor enters your office and shake their hand.
- Make that person your focus.
- Listen to what they are saying; make eye contact.
- Offer your business card and walk them to your office lobby when you conclude.

## Just do it

- Under promise and over deliver, it makes a lasting impression.
- If you say you are going to do it, make sure you do.
- Make your customer feel positive about the service they get from SBA.
- Always, always, return calls promptly – it may not be important to you, but it is to your caller.

[Continued, see Service on page 5](#)

## SBA Expo 04 is Just Around the Corner



With only weeks to go before the SBA, and the nation, celebrate Small Business Week, business owners in your districts still have time to register for what is shaping up to be the biggest celebration in SBA history. The benefit for small business, in addition to the great networking, will be a two day matchmaking event and training seminars occurring throughout the conference. The National Ombudsman's office will be holding a national regulatory fairness hearing during the conference. You don't want small businesses in your district to miss out because they did not know about the conference, so take every opportunity to promote the event.

# Staff Profile

## *For Georgia's Jorge Valentin-Stone, Helping Small Business is a Passion*

**Contributed by Jimmy Hightower, Georgia District Office PIO**

Jorge Valentin-Stone is proof that foreign travel and business experience are great building blocks for a career in international trade and small business development.

Add the fact that he gained his Spanish language skills as a youngster in Puerto Rico and you get a flavor for the kind of diverse skills Jorge brings to his work at the Georgia District Office.

Jorge joined the SBA in January 2001 as an Economic Development Specialist with the Marketing & Outreach Division. He was formerly Marketing Manager with the Atlanta Minority Business Development Center in Atlanta for almost two years.

At the SBA, Jorge divides his time between working within Georgia's fast growing Hispanic community and outreach to military veterans. In addition to one-on-one counseling, he conducts workshops covering the full range of SBA programs, including how to obtain start-up financing and business plan development. He also lends support to promoting the use of SBA backed international trade lending programs.



Jorge conducts regular workshops at Ft. McPherson for soon-to-be discharged military personnel and twice monthly for veterans at the Georgia Department of Labor. He also conducts monthly workshops with the Hispanic-American Center for Economic Development (HACED) and with the Mexican-American Business Chamber.

"The greatest satisfaction with my job is hearing back from people I've had a chance to help, on how something I said allowed them to move ahead with their business development plans," said Jorge who earned his BS Degree from LSU in Business Administration with a major in International Development.

Jorge has a varied background in international development including 15 years as an industrial representative with the Puerto Rico Economic Development Administration. He spent another three years with TROPICO, a corporation established by the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico to promote high-tech and bio-technology investment on the island.

In the mid 1980's, Jorge, then a Senior Consultant with Ernst & Young accounting firm, found himself in the mist of national turmoil in El Salvador. At the time, a guerilla faction was trying to overthrow the country's central government. "Late at night, you could hear gunfire throughout the capital, San Salvador," recalled Jorge. "And there were occasional explosions."

Jorge grew up in the South, mainly in Louisiana and Mississippi, until he was 12 when his family moved to Puerto Rico. He has three daughters and three grandchildren. Jorge and his second wife, Gladys, have a 15-year old daughter Katherine Marie.

## *Transitions*

### **Tennessee**

Phillip Duncan, ADD/Economic Development

Retired

### **Alabama**

Geraldine Green, Administrative Officer

Retired

Beth Vick, Economic Development Specialist & PIO

Retired

### **South Carolina**

Michele Downey, Program Assistant

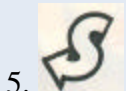
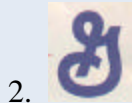
Retired

Marjorie Forney, Economic Development Specialist & PIO

Transferred to DOD

## Test your brand recognition skills

*Can you name the company represented by the following logos?*



See Page 5 for answers.

## Get Wired

### Computer Spring Cleaning

Andre Travis, FITS

Spring is the time that we set aside for cleaning our yards, attics and the gutters on our homes; a good idea in your professional and personal life would be to add your computer on the list of “Must Clean” items. Regular maintenance of our physical hardware and recapturing memory by eliminating unneeded files are equally important to insure that your computer is operating optimally.

While today’s computers are certainly more durable than in times past, the demands we place on them have increased as well. We should all be aware that computer systems are not without their needs. A well maintained computer runs more efficiently, responds to your commands more quickly and is less likely to crash unexpectedly. Just as your car needs periodic servicing else it will leave you stranded on the roadside, your computer will take care of you if you take care of your computer.

By building computer maintenance into your regular routine you can avoid costly problems and delays and save yourself a load of frustration to boot. Here are some helpful hardware clean-up hints for keeping your computer happy.

**A well maintained computer runs more efficiently, responds to your commands more quickly and is less likely to crash unexpectedly**

- **Keyboard:** Clean the keyboard with a soft cloth and rubbing alcohol. Clean the key tops, and in between keys. Use a vacuum cleaner to clean debris from between keys. Be careful using canned air as it can force debris under the keys.
- **Mouse:** To clean your mouse, turn the mouse on its back (be sure not to let it wriggle away). Remove the sphere over the ball. Remove the ball (you can turn it over and burp it and the ball will eject). Use a cotton swab dipped in rubbing alcohol to clean the dirt from the three small wheels. Wash the ball with soap and warm water to remove any oil and dirt. No alcohol on the ball as it will damage the rubber. Put the mouse back together and it will be ready to go!
- **Desktop Monitors :** Clean with a non-ammonia cleaner such as a staticide do not spray anything directly on the monitor. Spray your cloth with cleaner and then wipe any grime or fingerprints from the screen. Never use an abrasive.



To submit articles for  
Inside Region IV,  
please email  
David Perry, Regional  
Communications Director at  
[david.perry@sba.gov](mailto:david.perry@sba.gov)

- **Laptop Monitors :** Laptop monitors can be more sensitive so, first, turn the computer off. Dampen a clean, soft, lint-free cloth or paper with water or a mild glass clearing that contains no alcohol, ammonia or abrasives and wipe the screen. Never spray liquid directly on the screen.

## Marketing

Continued from page 1

Many professionally printed color brochures are being replaced with downloadable fact sheets. These cost efficient fact sheets allow greater flexibility because they can be modified immediately if changes occur in the programs and they can be localized to include district office contact information. Other products, like the branded pocket folders many offices use for meetings and presentations, will be replaced with templates that can be localized, printed on standard size labels and affixed to blank folders at a significantly reduced cost. The first of these products is already on line under the marketing tools section of Employee Gateway at <http://www.yes.sba.gov/offices/mcs/>. Look for new graphics and enhancements in other areas in the future, such as SBA resource partner co-brands and tradeshow display designs.

The new marketing plan is clearly about more than just the look and feel of SBA's public face. It calls for the implementation of steps to ensure common understanding of marketing within the Agency, management's commitment to marketing priorities, and common marketing goals. Identifying key marketing staff in each district and then developing systems for communications between the field and headquarters will be central to building a unified marketing campaign.

In the weeks and months ahead, we will be seeing greater attention to how we market SBA, new tools to help improve our effectiveness and opportunities to communicate within the Agency about what works and what does not. We will also have quality controls to ensure consistency of message and measurements in place to guarantee that the agency and our small business customers are getting a return on their investment.

**"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence then, is not an act, but a habit." - Aristotle**

## Customer Service

Continued from page 2

### Be a Can Do Not a Can't Do

- Project a positive, can-do attitude.
- Let people know what you can do for them, rather than beginning your conversation with what you cannot do.
- Don't commit to doing something you cannot do.
- There is nothing wrong with saying "I don't know, but I will find out."
- If you cannot help them, do your best to put them in touch with someone who can.
- Don't involve your customer in your bureaucracy: they don't need to know all the internal obstacles you face in meeting their needs.

- Ask callers if there is anything else you can do to help them before terminating a call.
- Stay on topic, our role is to help small businesses, not counsel on personal issues or give unsolicited advice

### Calm Hostile Waters

- Just remember when dealing with a hostile client that in most cases there is history behind that person's anger.
- Have compassion and be patient
- Use terms like: "I understand, how can I help you" or "I understand you are upset, but..."
- Stay focused on helping that person find a resolution to their concern.

### Quiz Answers :

1. Firestone
2. General Mills
3. Marriott
4. Nestle
5. Subway
6. Yahoo

Region IV Execution Scorecard Standings as of April 26, 2004

Office	Size	District Director	Rank	Score
South Florida	Very Large	Pancho Marrero	9	110.77
North Florida	Medium	Wilfredo Gonzalez	15	108.67
Georgia	Large	Terri Denison	37	103
Kentucky	Medium	Phil Manohey (A)	52	99.68
North Carolina	Large	Lee Cornelison	57	97.85
Alabama	Medium	Raymond Hembree (A)	59	96.42
Mississippi	Small	Janita Stewart	61	93.45
South Carolina	Medium	Elliott Cooper	64	91.24
Tennessee	Large	Clint Smith (A)	66	90.35

# PHOTO FILE

*District Offices Host Events*

Got a shot to share,  
Send it to [david.perry@sba.gov](mailto:david.perry@sba.gov)  
along with a description of the  
picture.



North Carolina



Sir Speedy Print in Charlotte  
was the site of the NC tax relief  
information event held by the  
Regional Administrator.

Photos of DD Lee Cornelison,  
and RA Nuby Fowler with Sir  
Speed Print owners Janet and  
Pat Jayne



Georgia

Nuby Fowler, (right) and GA  
DD Terri Denison with DeKalb  
County officials (right) at the  
public announcement of findings  
and recommendations of the  
Georgia SBA African American  
Taskforce



Tennessee

Left and above; Acting DD Clint  
Smith and Nuby Fowler with  
Michael Evans, President and CEO of  
GEM Technologies at the tax relief  
information event in Knoxville.  
Below, Tennessee lender round table  
discussion.



Kentucky

Phil Manhony, Nuby Fowler and  
Danahauer discuss SBA Loan  
programs at the Kentucky  
lenders roundtable.



South Florida



South Florida's tax relief education event was hosted by  
Liza Brasil owner of The Sanctuary barber salon. Above  
center with Nuby Fowler, Gil Colon and the Miami DO  
staff; right Brasil receives an award from Gil Colon and  
Nuby Fowler.



Photo Submissions by:  
Mike Ernandes, NC PIO  
Thaddeus Hosley, SF PIO  
David Tiller, TN PIO  
Jeri Grant, KY PIO  
Jimmy Hightower, GA PIO